

inside surface of the lid, and/or the one or more attachment projections of the inner set are oblique with respect to the outside surface of the lid, and/or the one or more attachment projections of the outer set are oblique with respect to the outside surface of the lid.

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REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending. By this Amendment, the specification is amended, claims 1, 5-7, 11-12 and 14-18 are amended and claim 20 is added. No new matter is added. The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten paragraph (37 C.F.R. §1.121(b)(1)(iii)) and claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)). Favorable reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiner Merek for the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the January 23, 2003 personal interview. During the interview, amendments were proposed which, it was agreed, would overcome the rejection of record. Specifically, it was proposed to amend the claims to recite both inner and outer sets of projections, such as those exemplified in Fig. 5 of this application. The Examiner suggested clearly defining how the two sets of attachment projections are related to each other on the cover, and in response to that suggestion the claims are amended to recite "inner" and "outer" sets of projections.

I. Formal Matters

A. The specification is amended to correct informalities discovered during review of the application by Applicants' representative.

B. The Office Action rejects claims 11-19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing amendments obviate this rejection.

C. During the interview, it was proposed to further clarify the "oblique" feature to better distinguish from, e.g., the projections disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 2,695,115 to Roop.

However, upon reconsideration, it is respectfully submitted that, when read in light of the specification, it is clear that "oblique," as recited in the claims, means that the projections as a whole are oblique, not merely that they include one or more oblique surfaces. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Roop does not disclose "oblique" projections as recited in the claims.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 5, 9, 11-14 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,586,656 to Abrums, and rejects claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Abrums in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,695,115 to Roop. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 11 recite, *inter alia*, inner and outer sets of projections on the outside surface of a lid. As agreed during the interview, the applied prior art does not teach or suggest this feature. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

B. The Office Action rejects claims 8 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Abrums in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,423,453 to Fritz. This rejection is respectfully traversed, as claims 8 and 18 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.


C. The Office Action rejects claims 10 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Abrums in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,356,026 to Andress et al. (Andress). This rejection is respectfully traversed, as claims 10 and 19 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claims. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5, 8-15 and 17-27 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:  
Appendix

Date: March 17, 2003

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## APPENDIX

## Changes to Claims:

1. (Amended) A container and lid combination, comprising:

a container including:

a bottom surface,

an opening,

a top edge surrounding the opening, and

a first attachment mechanism provided on the bottom surface; and

a lid engageable with the top edge of the container to cover the opening, the

lid including:

an inside surface that faces an interior of the container when the lid is engaged with the top edge of the container,

an outside surface that faces away from the interior of the container when the lid is engaged with the top edge of the container,

a second attachment mechanism provided on the inside surface and engageable with the first attachment mechanism, the lid being attachable to the bottom surface of the container in a nested state via engagement of the first and second attachment mechanisms, and

a third attachment mechanism provided on the outside surface and engageable with the first attachment mechanism, the third attachment mechanism comprising an inner set of one or more attachment projections and an outer set of one or more attachment projections, the lid being attachable to the bottom surface of the container in an inverted state via engagement of the first and second attachment mechanisms.

5. (Amended) The container and lid combination according to claim 1, wherein the second attachment mechanism comprises at least one second attachment projection

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protruding from the inside surface of the lid, ~~and the third attachment mechanism comprises at least one third attachment projection protruding from the outside surface of the lid.~~

6. (Amended) The container and lid combination according to claim 1, wherein the second attachment mechanism comprises a plurality of second attachment projections protruding from the inside surface of the lid, ~~and the third attachment mechanism comprises a plurality of third attachment projections protruding from the outside surface of the lid.~~

7. (Amended) The container and lid combination according to claim 6, wherein, as viewed in cross section, the second attachment projections are oblique with respect to the inside surface of the lid, and/or the ~~third~~ one or more attachment projections of the third attachment mechanism are oblique with respect to the outside surface of the lid.

11. (Amended) A nesting container and lid set comprising:  
a plurality of containers, the containers being of different sizes and thereby nestable together, at least ~~one~~ two of the containers each including:

a bottom surface,  
an opening,  
a top edge surrounding the opening, and  
a ~~first container-side~~ attachment mechanism provided on the bottom surface; and

a corresponding plurality of lids engageable with the top edges of the containers to cover the openings, at least one of the lids ~~that does not correspond to the at least one of the containers~~ including:

an inside surface that faces an interior of the container when the lid is engaged with the top edge of the container,

an outside surface that faces away from the interior of the container when the lid is engaged with the top edge of the container, and

~~a third~~ an outside surface-side attachment mechanism provided on the outside surface and engageable with the first container-side attachment mechanism of the at least one of the containers, the outside surface-side attachment mechanism comprising an inner set of one or more attachment projections and an outer set of one or more attachment projections;

wherein the bottom surface of a smaller one of the at least one two of the containers is attachable to the outside surface of the at least one of the lids via engagement of the ~~first container-side and second~~ attachment mechanisms and the inner set of one or more attachment projections, but is not attachable via engagement of the container-side attachment mechanism and the outer set of one or more attachment projections, and a larger one of the at least two of the containers is attachable to the outside surface of the at least one of the lids via engagement of the container-side attachment mechanism and the outer set of one or more attachment projections.

12. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim 11, wherein at least one of the lids further comprises ~~a second~~ an inside surface-side attachment mechanism provided on the inside surface and engageable with the container-side first attachment mechanism, the lid being attachable to the bottom surface of the corresponding container in a nested state via engagement of the container-side first and inside surface-side second attachment mechanisms.

14. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim 11, wherein the container-side first attachment mechanism of each of the at least two of the containers comprises at least one container-side attachment projection protruding from the bottom surface of the corresponding one of the at least one two of the containers.

15. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim ~~11~~ 14, wherein the container-side first attachment mechanism comprises a plurality of container-side

~~first-attachment projections protruding from the bottom surface of the at least one of the containers.~~

16. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim 15, wherein, as viewed in cross section, the container-side ~~first-attachment~~ projections are oblique with respect to the bottom surface of the corresponding one of the at least ~~one~~ two of the containers.

17. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim 11, wherein at least one portion of each container is transparent.

18. (Amended) The nesting container and lid set according to claim 11, wherein, as seen in plan view, an outer circumference of each lid is free of any protrusions, with the outer circumference of a largest one of the lids optionally not being free of any protrusions.

Claim 20 is added.